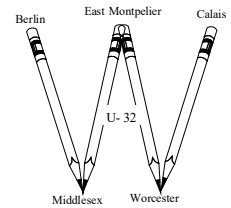


Washington Central Unified Union School District

WCUUSD exists to nurture and inspire in all students the passion, creativity and power to contribute to their local and global communities.

1130 Gallison Hill Road
Montpelier, VT 05602
Phone (802) 229-0553
Fax (802) 229-2761



**WCUUSD Policy Committee
Meeting Agenda
11.15.22 8:30-10:30 PM
Central Office, 1130 Gallison Hill Rd. Montpelier
Via Video Conference**

Virtual Meeting Information

<https://tinyurl.com/5n6fczz4>

Meeting ID: 812 0833 4894

Password: 184628

Dial by Your Location: 1-929-205-6099

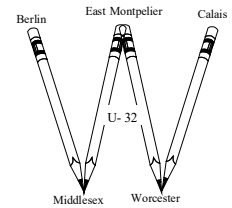
1. Call To Order
2. Approve Minutes of 10.12.22 – pg. 2
3. Review Policies (Discussion/Action)
 - 3.1. F2: Non- Discriminatory Mascots & Branding – pg. 6
 - 3.2. C13: Students Who Are Homeless – pg. 8
 - 3.3. C5: Weapons and Firearms – pg. 11
 - 3.4. A1: Board Conflict of Interest - pg. 14
 - 3.5. Building Access Policy
4. Public Comments
5. Future Agenda Items
 - 5.1. Anti-Racism
 - 5.2. Humanity and Justice Statement
6. Adjourn

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Meagan Roy, Ed.D.
Superintendent



**WCUUSD Policy Committee
Meeting Minutes Unapproved
10.12.22 4:45-6:45 PM
Central Office, 1130 Gallison Hill Rd. Montpelier
Via Video Conference**

Present: Superintendent Meagan Roy, Amy Molina, Chris McVeigh, Michelle Ksepka, Natasha Eckart Baning, Cat Fair, Jonathan Goddard

- 1. Call to Order: Chris McVeigh called the meeting to order at 4:52.**
- 2. Approve Minutes of 9.19.22: Natasha Eckart Baning moved to approve the minutes of September 19, 2022. This motion carried unanimously.**
- 3. Review Policies**
 - 3.1. Policy Work Plan:** Meagan Roy shared an updated policy work plan. Chris McVeigh asked, what mechanism do we have so that other people (e.g. community, staff, students, etc.) can engage in the process, e.g. suggest looking at a policy, suggest creating a policy, reviewing, updating, etc. Meagan Roy stated that she would be interested in what the past practice has been; however, in her mind such a request would go through the Policy Committee. Natasha Eckart Baning stated that the Coalition had worked closely with policy, e.g. had brought issues or suggestions or input to the Policy Committee. She shared that a Families of Color Affinity group will be meeting for the first time in the near future; she expects that this group will, similarly, bring policy-related input to the Policy Committee. She also noted that there are a couple of student groups that she would imagine will want to engage with the Policy Committee as well. Meagan Roy stated that the challenge right now is that we are in the middle of the process of reviewing and drafting policy - she would imagine that next year, once the process is underway, and a work plan is in place, there can be advance notice to all, which would allow them to engage with the Policy Committee. Amy Molina recalled that in the past it has seemed that when people or groups have wanted to create or review a policy, they came to the board who then considered the issue and gave their direction or their “permission” to the Policy Committee to work on this and bring it to the board. Chris McVeigh stated that he thinks it could be either - it could come from the board level or the request or communication could come directly to the Policy Committee. Cat Fair stated that she likes the idea of multiple pathways, and that ultimately the policy comes to the board. She would like to be sure that we are addressing barriers that may be in place,

for all people to engage with this process. Michelle Ksepka reiterated that ultimately this is for the full board to consider. Chris McVeigh asked how we can be sure that this is communicated widely. Michelle Ksepka suggested having “public comment” on the Policy Committee agenda as well. Meagan Roy stated that when this committee brings the work plan to the board, we should be explicit that we are looking for the board to provide feedback and that overall the board has given the charge to the Policy Committee. Natasha Eckart Baning wondered whether, for example, VSBA has provided some guidelines as to whether topics should be considered under “policy” or under “procedure.” She stated that having a framework for people to outline their concerns or their suggestions for policy might be helpful for people to understand the process. Chris McVeigh suggested creating a template for the website, for people to create such a framework and submit to the Policy Committee. Meagan Roy reminded the committee that the full board will be considering the work plan next week, too - she suggested that one of the public forums could be devoted to the topic of policy. Amy Molina suggested that the VSBA has some resources around this. Chris McVeigh stated that he doesn’t want to make it so complicated and unwieldy that it is a barrier to some to engage. Meagan Roy will work on a draft input form; she would still like some understanding about what to put onto the website/ what to communicate, along with the form. Chris McVeigh will draft an introductory paragraph, to address Superintendent Roy’s concern around that. Michelle Ksepka will add “public comment” to the Policy Committee agenda.

3.2. F2 Non –Discriminatory Mascots & Branding: The committee considered the Agency of Education’s model policy which is also referenced on the VSBA website. Amy Molina stated that this has been debated and discussed across the state over the past couple of years; she doesn’t see the need to edit this template. Chris McVeigh suggested a more specific time frame (rather than the current verbiage “periodically”) - the language “periodically review per our policy review cycle” was agreed upon. Cat Fair asked whether we have ever had at any of our schools, complaints about branding or mascots - there was no recollection of any controversy around these; however, Doty does not currently have a mascot. Chris McVeigh would like to get some legal counsel about whether we need to have more specificity/ more clearly defined in the complaints hearing process. Natasha Eckart Baning suggested that the complaints process be open to anyone, not just community members - for example, from a visiting athlete. This policy will go to the board in November for the first reading, after legal counsel has been sought. Meagan Roy reminded the board that this policy must be in place by the end of this school year.

3.3. C5 Weapons and Firearms: Chris McVeigh had provided a suggested edit to our current C5 policy - he renamed “Weapons and Student Conduct” as a separate policy from the Weapons policy. He had inserted some language referring to a “knife exception” into the Weapons and Student Conduct policy. Meagan Roy stated that we currently have a student conduct and discipline policy. If we split weapons into (1) fire arms and (2) weapons and student conduct, then we will have an overlap with the existing policy around student conduct and discipline. VSBA’s model policy for C5 remained in its previous draft - they opened the policy to consider, but kept it in its previous form. Michelle Ksepka stated that C5 is titled “Firearms.” She noted that the

VSBA's "Student Conduct" policy has been under consideration for some time and has not been updated from the VSBA at this time. Chris McVeigh asked, do we want to separate firearms from dangerous weapons in a policy? Natasha Eckart Baning clarified: in VSBA, firearms are on its own but other weapons will fall under "student conduct"? Michelle Ksepka stated that we are not sure yet, as they have not shared their updated model "student conduct" policy yet. Natasha Eckart Baning stated that zero tolerance policies are dangerous; ultimately they do not protect the people they are meant to protect. Also, we live in Vermont - we are a hunting state - she also spoke about how often students might have a pocket knife in their pocket (e.g. after a weekend of hunting...) The idea of a 3rd grade student having to go to the board to defend having a pocket knife in their pocket doesn't make sense to her. She spoke about the language in the policy that is so harsh it might cause a student, upon discovering they had forgotten to leave their, e.g. pocket knife at home, to not want to come forward with it. She noted that the process of coming before the board can be a very intimidating process for students and families alike. She stated that to date the board has handled these cases sensibly and reasonably. Amy Molina stated that Vermont law indicates that it is illegal to have weapons on school grounds. The language that is used is "deadly or dangerous weapon." Meagan Roy suggested that, if the concern is to allow for discretion, could the language in the policy be "may be" rather than "shall be" (brought before the board for a hearing), but to keep the language around firearm as "shall be." Jonathan Goddard stated that he certainly sees firearms as a separate weapon that leaves no room for discretion around requiring an expulsion hearing. Natasha Eckart Baning stated that the process is backward, because by the time a student has come to the board for a hearing, most times the discipline has been administered. Meagan Roy stated that suspension is under the purview of the administrators; however, expulsion is what the board considers at a hearing. She suggested, logistically, is there a way to have one policy and make the distinction using the verbiage of "may" versus "shall" (e.g. for firearms). Natasha Eckart Baning stated that it seems in her experience that administrators have managed the consequences of these types of violations and the board has not been in the position to mete out the consequence of expulsion. She asked why the language "may" can't be used as a whole, and to leave it to the administration to decide whether a particular case comes to the board for a hearing. Amy Molina suggested trying to make one policy, as Superintendent Roy had indicated, and she offered to work on drafting such. Chris McVeigh stated that in the case that the administration decides not to bring something to the board for a hearing, he would like to have an informational component so that the board is kept apprised. Cat Fair will work with Amy Molina on a draft and this will come to the committee for the next meeting, for review.

3.4. Building Access Policy: (not ready for consideration yet)

3.5. School Choice: Chris McVeigh asked, how to solicit community input into the work around this policy? Meagan Roy indicated that the board has just begun its work around resources across the schools; she is wondering whether we want to hold off on this policy until we have done some of the ground work. Meagan Roy suggested that over the second half of the school year she would hope to move toward strategic planning, but expects strategic planning to be done in earnest next school year (2023-24.) Michelle Ksepka stated that in 2021 we surveyed the community and had a response of 220. Jonathan Goddard stated that although school choice does not impact a great number of people, to the ones that it does, it *is* a big deal. He stated that it is

important to seek input from stakeholders. Chris McVeigh spoke about the impact of school choice to the smaller schools. He stated that it would be important to be aware of a “tipping point” for the smaller schools, the consequence of losing just a few students could be huge. This is something to consider in the policy creation. Cat Fair spoke about the far reaching unintended consequences of the policy, and yet on the other hand, there are instances when it is appropriate for students and families to benefit from school choice. She would like the conversation to be student centered, and she suggests having a very clear process/ rationale. The committee will discuss this again at the next meeting.

3.6. Equity Policy & Practices: Meagan Roy stated that we do not currently have an Equity Policy. Chris McVeigh stated that the board has not considered a specific policy in the past. Natasha Eckart Baning shared the work that the Coalition has done around creating a framework for an equity lens re: the handbook. Meagan Roy shared that administrators had used the same tool to consider the elementary school handbook as well. She shared that the process is ongoing, though. Natasha Eckart Baning spoke about the topic of “accessibility” within the equity lens - for example, the unwieldy length of the handbook. She stated that what is accessible to a two parent professional household is going to be different than what is accessible to a single-parent, poverty-level household. She stated that many parents, regardless, likely do not have the time to read and then review with their children the 50+ page document. Some discussion followed about ways to make the document less cumbersome (e.g. providing links within the document for a “deeper dive.”) Natasha Eckart Baning suggested providing small doses through other messages to families, to help make their ways through the document. Natasha Eckart Baning offered to take back to the coalition the idea to make a first attempt at an equity policy, to come back to the policy committee to work with. Chris McVeigh stated that this would be a good place to start. She asked, for example, would the equity policy include language around students’ chosen names and chosen pronouns, or would its own policy be created? Meagan Roy indicated that in a student-led manner we had asked students what pronouns they choose, and that this has brought up issues related to the topic - e.g., who gets the right to indicate this - parents or student? She believes this is a very rich conversation yet to be had. Natasha Eckart Baning has some resources from recent cases in other states around the topic of pronouns, chosen names, etc. - she will share with the committee members. Cat Fair thanked the group for addressing concerns she had expressed around the weapons policy.

3.6.1. [Vermont Department of Inclusion Equity Lens Tool](#)

3.6.2. Agency of Education : [Educational Equity](#)

3.6.3. Montpelier Policy: Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Harassment

3.6.4. Champlain Valley Policy

3.6.5. Essex Westford Policy Sample

4. Future Agenda Items

4.1. Anti-Racism

4.2. Humanity and Justice Statement

5. Adjourn: The committee adjourned at 6:41 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Grace, Committee Recording Secretary

Complaints

An individual may request an opportunity to appear before the Board for purposes of presenting the complaint, relevant facts, and further explanations. The board shall hear the complaint in a fair and just manner. The Board shall render a decision within 45 days of the hearing, which must include a summary of facts and basis for the decision.

If the individual is unsatisfied with the Board's decision, the individual may appeal the decision to the Secretary of Education. Appeals shall be filed within 30 days of the school board's decision by sending a written notice of appeal to the Agency of Education.

<i>VSBA Review Date</i>	<i>August 15, 2022</i>
<i>Date Warned</i>	<i>November 16, 2022</i>
<i>Date Adopted</i>	
<i>Legal References</i>	<i>16 V.S.A. § 568</i>
<i>Cross References</i>	<i>District Equity Policy</i>

DISCLAIMER: This model policy has been prepared by the Vermont School Boards Association for the sole and exclusive use of VSBA members, as a resource to assist member school boards with their policy development. School Districts should consult with legal counsel and revise model policies to address local facts and circumstances prior to adoption, unless the model policy states otherwise. VSBA continually makes revisions based on school districts' needs and local, state and federal laws, regulations and court decisions, and other relevant education activity.

Required

**WASHINGTON CENTRAL UNIFIED
UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT**

Board of Directors' Policy

Students Who Are Homeless

POLICY: _____ **C13** _____
WARNED: _____
ADOPTED: _____
EFFECTIVE: _____

Policy

The Washington Central Unified Union School District (District) is committed to the success of every student. Homeless students in the District will have access to the education and other services needed to ensure that an opportunity is available to meet the same academic achievement standards to which all students are held.

The District will designate a liaison for students in homeless situations to carry out duties as required by law.

The District will ensure that homeless students are not stigmatized nor segregated on the basis of their status as homeless. A homeless student will be admitted to the school district in which the student is actually living or to the student's school of origin as requested by the parent and in accordance with the student's best interest. Transportation will be provided to and from the student's school of origin at the request of the parent, or in the case of an unaccompanied student, the District's liaison for homeless students. Homeless students will have access to all programs and services for which they are eligible, including but not limited to special education services, preschool, school nutrition programs, and language assistance for English learners.

Definitions

1. **Homeless students** means those lacking a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence, which could include:
 - A. Sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or similar reason;
 - B. Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks or camping grounds **due to** the lack of alternative adequate accommodations;
 - C. Living in emergency or transitional shelters;
 - D. Being abandoned in hospitals;
 - E. Having a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as regular sleeping accommodations for human beings;
 - F. Living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, transportation stations or similar settings; and

G. Migratory children living in conditions described in the previous examples.

2. **Enroll and enrollment** mean attending classes and participating fully in school activities.
3. **Unaccompanied youth** means a homeless child or youth not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian.
4. **School of Origin** means the school that a child or youth attended when permanently housed or the school in which the child or youth was last enrolled, including a preschool. When a child or youth completes the final grade level served by the school of origin, it also includes the designated receiving school at the next grade level for all feeder schools.

Administrative Responsibilities

The superintendent or designee shall develop written procedures to ensure the following rights of eligible students:

1. Equal access to the same free, appropriate public education, including public prekindergarten education, as is provided to other children and youth;
2. Immediate enrollment, even when records normally required for enrollment are not present;
3. Remain in the school of origin, if it is in the student's best interest, in order to maintain educational stability;
4. Access to all educational and related services for which they are eligible, including Title I services, educational programs for children with disabilities, educational programs for English learners, career and technical education, programs for gifted and talented students, and free school meals;
5. Full participation in school, which may include participation in extracurricular activities;
6. Transportation, provided by the local education agency (LEA), to and from the school of origin;
7. Privacy, such that information about a homeless student's living situation will be treated as a student education record and not deemed to be directory information.
8. Dispute an eligibility, school selection, or enrollment decision, and for a child or youth to be admitted to the school in which enrollment is sought, pending the resolution of the dispute.

<i>VSBA Update:</i>	<i>September 13, 2022</i>
<i>Date Warned:</i>	
<i>Date Adopted:</i>	
<i>Legal Reference(s):</i>	<i>McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (as amended by ESSA) 42 U.S.C. §§ 11431 – 11432</i>
	<i>Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, 20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99</i>
<i>Cross References:</i>	

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Required/Recommended

**WASHINGTON CENTRAL UNIFIED
UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT**

Board of Directors’ Policy

Weapons & Firearms

POLICY:	_____ <u>C5</u> _____
WARNED:	_____
ADOPTED:	_____
EFFECTIVE:	_____

It is the intent of the board to comply with the federal Gun Free Schools Act of 1994, and the Vermont state laws (16 V.S.A. §1166 & §1162) requiring school districts to provide consequences for students who bring or possess dangerous weapons or firearms at school. It is further the intent of the board to maintain a student discipline system consistent with the requirements of the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Vermont State Board of Education rules.

Definitions: This policy shall define the terms “dangerous weapons”, “firearm/destructive device” “at school” and “expelled”. However, the school board may augment the definitions, provided they remain consistent with definitions required by state and federal law.

- a. The term “dangerous weapon” means
 - 1) Any knife, dagger, switchblade or, a folding knife with a blade in excess of two and one-half inches. Any folding knife with a blade less than two and one half inches, including a pocket knife and pen knife, shall be considered a dangerous or deadly weapon if it is used, threatened to be used, or possessed in a threatening manner or with the intent to cause harm to any person.
 - 2) Any other weapon, device, instrument, material or substance, whether animate or inanimate, which in the manner it is used or is intended to be used is known to be capable of producing death or serious bodily injury.
 - 3) Articles designed for other purposes but which could easily be used to inflict serious bodily harm and used by a pupil in a threatening manner. Examples are files, compasses, scissors, etc. A student who uses any article capable of inflicting serious bodily harm in an aggressive, belligerent or threatening manner, shall be deemed to be in possession of a weapon.

- b. “Firearm/Destructive Device” means
 - 1) any weapon, whether loaded or unloaded, which will expel a projectile by the action of an explosive and includes any weapon commonly referred to as a pistol, revolver, rifle, gun, machine gun or shotgun.

2) any destructive device, including explosives, incendiaries, or poison gas, including but not limited to: (i) bomb (ii) grenade (iii) rocket having a propellant charge of more than four ounces (iv) missile having an explosive or incendiary charge of more than one-quarter ounce; (v) mine; or (vi) similar device, unless such destructive device is under the supervision of a teacher and used as part of the curriculum.

c. "At school" means any setting that is under the control and supervision of the school district. It includes school grounds, facilities and vehicles used to transport students to and from school or school activities.

d. "Expelled" means the termination of educational services to a student for greater than 10 days, and is determined by the board.

Policy Statement

PART A: WITH REGARDS TO STUDENTS

Dangerous Weapons - Sanctions

No student shall knowingly possess or use a dangerous weapon at school. However, with the prior written consent of the superintendent or their designee, a student may possess a device that might be considered a dangerous weapon for a predetermined educational purpose.

The principal or his/her designee shall be responsible for carrying out discipline procedures, conforming with the guidelines established in WCUUSD Policy C20; Student Conduct and Discipline, for any student who knowingly possesses or uses a dangerous weapon at school.

Firearm/Destructive Device - Sanctions

No student shall possess or use a firearm or destructive device at school.

The principal or his/her designee shall be responsible for carrying out discipline procedures, conforming with the guidelines established in WCUUSD Policy C20; Student Conduct and Discipline, for any student who possesses or uses a firearm or destructive device at school.

Any student who brings a firearm to school, or who possesses a firearm at school shall be immediately suspended and brought by the superintendent to the school board for an expulsion hearing.

The superintendent shall refer to the appropriate law enforcement agency any student who brings a firearm to a school under the control and supervision of the school district. The superintendent may also report any incident subject to this policy to the Department for Children and Families (DCF).

A student found by the school board after a hearing to have brought a firearm to school shall be expelled for at least one calendar year. However, the school board may modify the expulsion on a case-by-case basis when it finds circumstances such as, but not limited to:

1. The student was unaware that he or she had brought a firearm to school.
2. The student did not intend to use the firearm to threaten or endanger others.
3. The student is disabled and the misconduct is related to the disability.
4. The student does not present an ongoing threat to others and a lengthy expulsion would not serve the best interests of the pupil.

At the discretion of the school board and administration, an expelled student may be afforded limited educational services at a site other than the school during the period of expulsion under this policy.

Policy Implementation

An expulsion hearing conducted under this policy shall afford due process as required by law and as developed by the superintendent or his or her designee.

The superintendent shall annually provide the Secretary of Education with descriptions of the circumstances surrounding expulsions imposed under this policy, the number of students expelled and the type of firearms involved.

PART B: WITH REGARD TO PERSONS OTHER THAN STUDENTS

No person shall enter onto school grounds while in possession of a dangerous weapon or firearm as described above unless:

- a. The person has prior written approval from the superintendent or their designee to bring the weapon to school for authorized activities;
- b. The person is a law enforcement officer.

Legal Reference(s):

16 V.S.A. §1162 (Suspension or expulsion of pupils)
16 V.S.A. §1166 (State law pursuant to Federal law)
13 V.S.A. §§4004, 4016 (Criminal offenses)
20 U.S.C. §7151 (Gun Free Schools Act)
18 U.S.C. §921 (Gun Free Schools Act of 1990)
20 U.S.C. §§ 1400 et seq. (IDEA)
29 U.S.C. §794 (Section 504, Rehabilitation Act of 1973)
Vt. State Board of Education Manual of Rules & Practices, §§4311, 4312

Required

**WASHINGTON CENTRAL UNIFIED
UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT**

Board of Directors' Policy

POLICY:	<u>A1</u>
WARNED:	<u>11.1.19</u>
ADOPTED:	<u>11.20.19</u>
EFFECTIVE:	<u>11.25.19</u>

BOARD MEMBER CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Members of the board recognize the ethical duty of all public officers to avoid conflicts of interest. In the case of school board members, this duty is extended by Vermont law to include a requirement that boards adopt policies and procedures to avoid the appearance of conflicts of interest. In order to comply with the obligations thus imposed, the board and its members will adhere to the following standards.

1. Board members will be familiar with the Vermont School Boards Association Codes of Ethics, and will observe their provisions.
2. Board members will be familiar with, and adhere to, those provisions of Vermont education law that define school board powers and govern board member compensation and public bidding processes.
3. A board member will do nothing intended to give the false impression that they have the authority to make decisions or take action on behalf of the board or the school administration.
4. A board member will not take any action that is intended to give the impression that they would represent special interests or partisan politics for personal gain.
5. A board member will not use their position on the board in any manner intended to unfairly promote personal fiduciary and/or financial interest or the fiduciary and/or financial interests of family members, friends or supporters.
6. A board member will not accept anything of value in return for taking particular positions on matters before the board.
7. A board member will do nothing intended to leave the impression that their position on any issue can be influenced by anything other than a fair presentation of all sides of the question.

When a board member becomes aware of involvement in a conflict of interest as defined in state law or this policy, they will declare the nature and extent of the conflict or appearance of conflict for inclusion in the board minutes, and will abstain from voting or participating in the discussion of the issue giving rise to the conflict.

When a conflict of interest claim against a board member is brought to the board in writing and

signed by another board member or a member of the public, and the board member against whom the claim is made does not concur that a conflict in fact exists, the following board procedures will be followed.

1. Upon a majority vote of the remaining board members, or upon order of the chair, the board will hold an informal hearing on the conflict of interest claim, giving both the board member and the person bringing the claim an opportunity to be heard.
2. At the conclusion of the informal hearing, the remaining board members will determine by majority vote to take one of the following actions:
 - A. Issue a public finding that the conflict of interest charge is not supported by the evidence and is therefore dismissed.
 - B. Issue a public finding that the conflict of interest charge is supported by the evidence and that the member should disqualify them from voting or otherwise participating in the board deliberations or decision related to that issue, as required by Vermont statute.
 - C. Issue a public finding that the conflict of interest charge is supported by the evidence, and in addition to disqualifying them from voting or otherwise participating in the board deliberations or decision, the board member should be formally censured or subjected to such other action as may be allowed by law.

Legal References: 16 V.S.A. §§ 557, 558, 559, 563(20), 262(c)